

D-730  
A. E. Phillips & Son  
Fishing Creek  
Private

Mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century

The A. E. Phillips family packinghouse on Back Creek has been a fixture on Upper Hoopers Island since the early twentieth century. Beginning in 1917, the family built a packinghouse structure on pilings that was destroyed during the 1933 storm that ravaged communities throughout the Chesapeake. The current location was acquired in 1934, and it was damaged severely on June 25, 1944 by the Dorchester tornado. During the 1990s the building was again modified with the construction of a second story as dormitory housing for migrant workers. The first story was sheathed with a brick veneer.

Brice R. Phillips, son of the founder, started selling steamed crabs from the back of a pickup truck in Ocean City, Maryland. He and his wife Shirley began opening seafood carryout stores in Ocean City to sell the packaged oysters and crabmeat produced by the company, and opened their first restaurant in Ocean City in 1956. They added restaurants in Baltimore, Washington, DC, and Florida. The packinghouse in Fishing Creek supplied crabmeat and oysters to the restaurants. The company added a second packinghouse on Deal Island called Island Seafood.

In addition to their two packinghouses in Maryland, Phillips now has crab-picking plants in Thailand, Indonesia, and the Phillipines to supply their restaurant demand. They also sell foreign crabmeat in California, Chicago, and Houston.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. D-730

### 1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic A. E. Phillips & Son  
other \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street and number 2423 Hooper Island Road \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication  
city, town Fishing Creek vicinity \_\_\_\_\_  
county \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Brice R. Phillips c/o Jay Newcomb  
street and number 2423 Hooper Island Road telephone 410-397-3188  
city, town Fishing Creek state Maryland zip code 21634

### 4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Dorchester County Clerk of Court liber PLC 217 folio 564  
city, town Cambridge tax map 100 tax parcel 194 tax ID number 6-096026

### 5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- \_\_\_\_\_ Contributing Resource in National Register District  
\_\_\_\_\_ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District  
\_\_\_\_\_ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
\_\_\_\_\_ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
\_\_\_\_\_ Recorded by HABS/HAER  
\_\_\_\_\_ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### 6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function		Resource Count	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	<u>1</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	<u>_____</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> domestic	<input type="checkbox"/> social	<u>_____</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	<u>_____</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<u>1</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Total
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> unknown		
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use		
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> other:		

**Number of Contributing Resources  
previously listed in the Inventory**  
\_\_\_\_\_

## 7. Description

Inventory No. D-730

### Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The A. E. Phillips & Son packinghouse is located at 2423 Hoopers Island Road in the village of Fishing Creek on Upper Hoopers Island in Dorchester County, Maryland. The packinghouse faces west with the principal roof oriented on a north/south axis. The building stands on the edge of Back Creek between Upper Island Road and Back Creek on made-made land infilled with oyster shell. Bulkheading surrounds the site on two sides.

Built around 1940 and enlarged with the past few years with a second story addition, the two-story, seven-bay by three-bay rectangular packinghouse is supported on a poured concrete foundation, and the exterior is sheathed with a combination of a brick veneer on the first floor and vinyl siding on the second story. The medium pitched roof is covered with asphalt shingles.

The west (main) elevation faces Upper Island Road is a long seven-bay façade defined by an asymmetrical fenestration. The first floor is pierced by a series of paired two-pane windows with partially glazed modern doors located at each end. Most of the window and door openings are spanned by flat, soldier course jack arches, and the openings are fitted with brick sills. The second story is defined by a series of seven two-pane modern windows.

The south gable end consists of a two-story, two-bay wing that protrudes from the slightly taller two-story main block. An exterior wood staircase provides access to a second story entrance sheltered by an engaged porch. The first floor, sheathed with the stretcher bond brick veneer, is pierced by two large two-pane windows fitted with brick sills. The second story is lighted by the same two-pane windows that pierce the west side second story elevation. Piercing the upper gable end is a small octagonal window, and the edge of the roof is finished with a slightly extended eave.

The north gable end is a flat wall surface with a plain brick veneered wall on the first story, and an exterior wooden staircase rising to a second story entrance. A modern two-pane window pierces the second floor, and upper gable end is marked by a small octagonal window.

The east side of the packinghouse is extended on the first story shed roofed frame enclosure, and an assortment of equipment is located along the edge of the property.

The interior has been modernized in recent years. The second story was added as housing for migrant workers.

## 8. Significance

Inventory No. D-730

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history	
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:	

Specific dates

Architect/Builder

Construction dates

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register

☐ Maryland Register

☒ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

The A. E. Phillips & Son packinghouse on Hoopers Island has been a fixture on Back Creek since the early twentieth century. Portions of the packinghouse date from the mid twentieth century, however the exterior appearance has been distinctly modified with the application of a brick veneer. The second story addition was erected during the 1990s in an effort to provide housing on site for migrant workers. The A. E. Phillips & Son building is one of four packinghouses remaining on Upper Hoopers Island.

### HISTORY AND SUPPORT

The Phillips family has owned A. E. Phillips in Fishing Creek, Hoopers Island, Maryland since 1917, packing oysters, crabmeat, and soft crabs under the brand name "Phillips Seafood." The original packinghouse, built in pilings, was carried away by the hurricane of 1933. The current structure was purchased in 1934, and was damaged on June 25, 1944 by the Dorchester tornado. In the 1990s the building was completely renovated and a second floor dormitory was added for Mexican migrant workers.

Brice R. Phillips, son of the founder, started out selling steamed crabs from the back of a pickup truck in Ocean City, Maryland. He and his wife, Shirley Phillips, began opening seafood carryout stores in Ocean City to sell the oysters and crabmeat produced by the company, and opened their first restaurant in Ocean City in 1956.<sup>1</sup> They added restaurants in Baltimore, Washington, DC, and Florida. The packinghouse in Fishing Creek supplied crabmeat and oysters to the restaurants. The company added a second packinghouse on Deal Island called Island Seafood.<sup>2</sup>

In 1960, the company changed its name from A. E. Phillips to A. E. Phillips & Son, Inc. The company had grown to the point that the plant in Fishing Creek was managed by Charles E. Shockley. Between 1965 and

<sup>1</sup> Joseph L. Arnold, *Maryland: Old Line To New Prosperity*, Windsor Publications, Inc., Northridge, CA, 1985, p. 210.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Jay Newcomb, Fishing Creek, Maryland, April 14, 1999, Oral History 126.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

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Name A. E. Phillips & Son

### Continuation Sheet

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1983, this plant employed between 20 and 25 women picking crabs.<sup>3</sup> Jay Newcomb became manager in 1987 when Charles Shockley retired.<sup>4</sup> By 1989 the local labor force had dwindled to 12 to 15 pickers, and Newcomb tried changing the work hours so that women who worked other local packinghouses in the morning could pick for him in the afternoon between 3 to 8 p.m. Frustrated by the difficulty of hiring new labor, Newcomb was the first in Dorchester County to hire Mexican migrant workers under the Federal H2-B non-agricultural guest worker program. In 2000 the company employed 36 people processing crabmeat.<sup>5</sup> In 2001 they advertised 50 openings for seasonal/temporary full time jobs to pick crabs.<sup>6</sup> The packinghouse purchases crabs from Virginia, North Carolina, and Louisiana to supplement those caught in Maryland waters.

In addition to their two packinghouses in Maryland, Phillips now has crab-picking plants in Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines to supply their restaurant business. They also sell the foreign crabmeat in California, Chicago, and Houston. The company produces Phillips Crab Soup, seafood seasoning, mustard, tartar sauce, and crab cakes produced in a commissary in Baltimore. Phillips Clam Chowder is produced in Easton, Maryland, and at a plant in Delaware. The soup is sold by the gallon to supermarkets for soup and salad bars.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *Directory of Maryland Manufacturers 1965-1966*, Maryland Department of Economic Development, p. 235; *Directory of Maryland Manufacturers 1977-1978*, Maryland Department of Economic and Community Development, p. 166; *Directory of Maryland Manufacturers 1983-1984*, Maryland Department of Economic and Community Development, p. 295.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Jay Newcomb, Fishing Creek, Maryland, April 14, 1999, Oral History 126.

<sup>5</sup> *2000 Maryland/DC Manufacturers Directory*, p. 368.

<sup>6</sup> Classifieds, *Cambridge Daily Banner*, January 22, 2001, p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Jay Newcomb, Fishing Creek, Maryland, April 14, 1999, Oral History 126.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

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Name A. E. Phillips & Son  
Continuation Sheet

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A. E. Phillips & Son  
2423 Hoopers Island Road  
Fishing Creek, Dorchester County, Maryland

Map 100, Parcel 194

PLC 217/ 564

Jane P. Groff and Brice R. Phillips, as the only heirs at law of  
Augustus Ellsworth Phillips and Leona Phillips

to

12/13/1980

Brice R. Phillips  
Parcel 1: west side of the county road that leads from Fishing Creek  
to Hoopersville

JFD 30/678

Arthur W. Phillips & Ethel Phillips

to

1/12/1934

Augustus E. Phillips & Ethel Phillips  
Northeast side of the main county road running through Upper Hoopers  
Island

JFD 30/676

Calvin Harrington, assignee of mortgage

to

5/26/1932

Arthur W. Phillips

**Maryland Historical Trust**  
**Maryland Inventory of**  
**Historic Properties Form**

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Name A. E. Phillips & Son  
**Continuation Sheet**

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JFD 13/238

Major T. Simmons & W. Rebecca Simmons

to

12/29/1922

Eastern Shore Trust Company  
Calvin Harrington, trustee on foreclosure and default

WHM 6/441

Board of County Commissioners of Dorchester County

to

7/1/1919

Major T. Simmons



## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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Dorchester County Land Records, various volumes, Dorchester County Courthouse.

(For a full listing of the resources see footnotes)

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property .25 acre

Acreage of historical setting 1 acre

Quadrangle name Honga, Maryland

Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The historic metes and bounds of this property are coincidental with the current boundary of the lot.

## 11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Paul B. Touart, Architectural Historian and Virginia Jenkins, Business Historian, CBMM		
organization	Private Consultant	date	2/15/2002
street & number	P. O. Box 5	telephone	410-651-1094
city or town	Westover	state	Maryland 21871

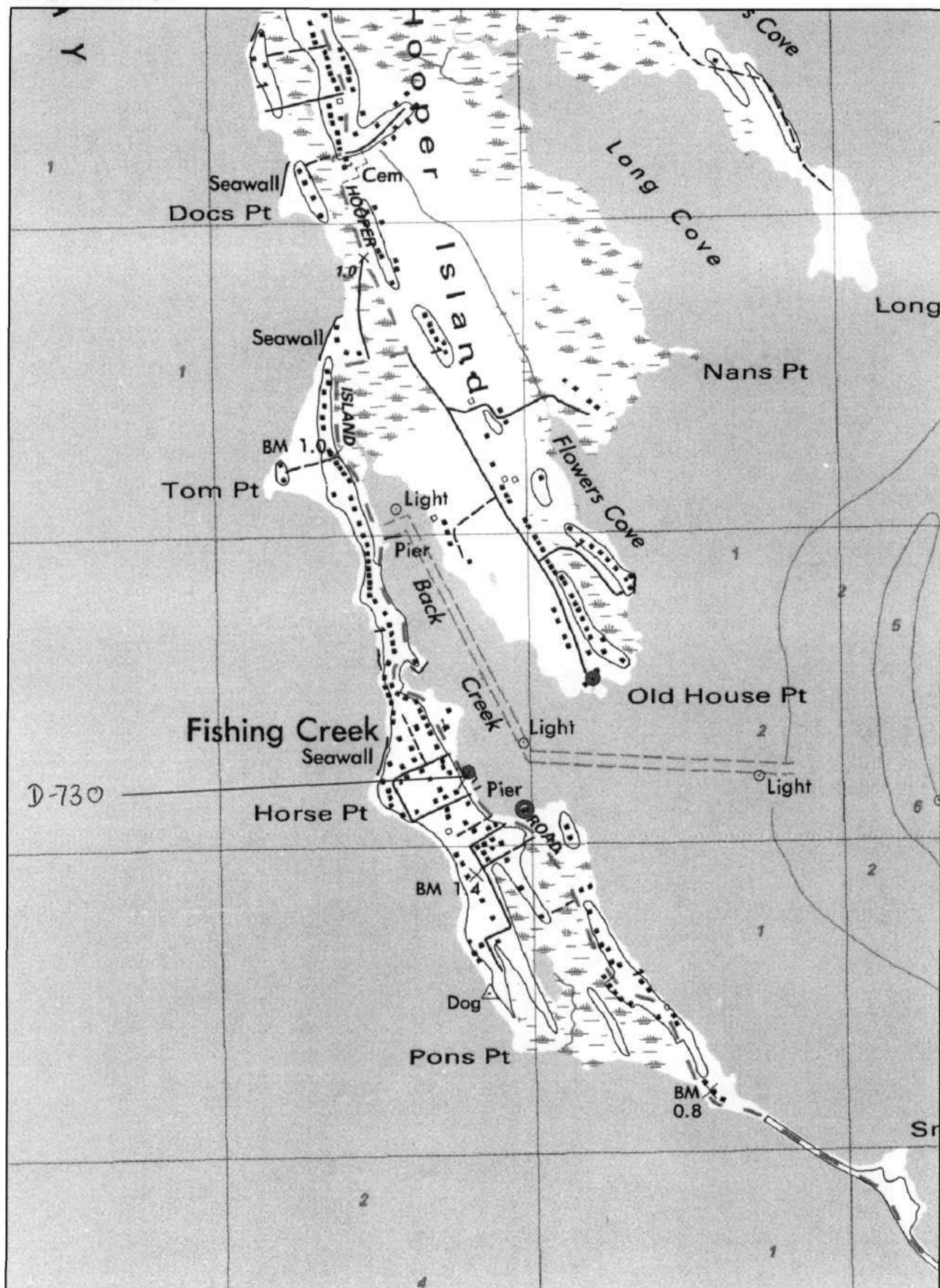
The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
DHCD/DHCP  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023  
410-514-7600



D-730  
A. E. Phillips & Son  
Fishing Creek  
Honga Quadrangle





8-730

A. E. PHILLIPS & SON

FISHING CREEK, DORCHESTER Co., MD.

NORTHWEST ELEVATION

2/2002, PAUL TOWANT, PHOTOGRAPHER

NEE. / MD. HISTORICAL TRUST

1 of 4



D-730

A. E. PHILLIPS & SON

FISHING CREEK, DORCHESTER Co., MS.

WEST ELEVATION

2/2002, PAUL TONANT, PHOTOGRAPHER

WET. / OLD HISTORICAL TREST

2 of 4



D-730

A. F. PHILLIPS & SON

FISHING CREEK, DORCHESTER Co., MD.

SOUTH ELEVATION

2/2002, PAUL TOWNT, PHOTOGRAPHER  
NEH/MD. HISTORICAL TRUST

3 OF 4





D-730

A. E. PHILLIPS & SON

FISHING CREEK, DORCHESTER G. MD.

NORTH ELEVATION

2/2002, PAUL TOWNT, PHOTOGRAPHED

NEG/MD. HISTORICAL TRUST

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